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ABSTRACT

The first part of this paper deals with the portal school as conceptually conceived in the Georgia Educational Model and defined as a group of schools which maintain close working relationships with a university and desire to participate in an exemplary teacher education program. The function of the school is to provide transition from the university preservice teacher education phases to full-service teaching in the in-service phase in school situations that operate in harmony with the program model. The second part of the paper describes the portal schools in operation at the University of Georgia as of July 1, 1971. Twelve schools have been set up, each with a university faculty member to serve as center coordinator. Each student spends four quarters in these schools, one each at sophomore and junior level and two at senior level. In the first quarter the assignments are generally non-instructional in the public school classroom and involve assisting individual children on small groups in practice activities. In the second quarter students are encouraged to observe, record, and react to individual pupil behaviors, classroom interaction, and the learning climate of the classroom. In the third quarter students are given opportunities to develop a variety of classroom strategies, and in the fourth they work as student teachers under the supervision of a master teacher and the university coordinator. (MBM)

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PORTAL SCHOOLS FOR THE

GEORGIA EDUCATIONAL MODEL

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PORTAL SCHOOLS FOR THE
GEORGIA EDUCATIONAL MODEL

This paper is in two parts. Part I deals with the Portal School as conceptually conceived in the Georgia Education Model (Johnson, Shearron, 1970, pp. 210-213). Part II describes the Portal Schools in operation at the University of Georgia as of July 1, 1971. Model is used in this paper synonymously with the Georgia Education Model, a performance based, field centered teacher education program. University students are referred to as students in this paper.

The Conceptual Design

The portal school concept (Sowards, 1968, pp. 118-25) envisions a group of schools established in school systems which maintain close working relationships with a university and desire to participate in an exemplary teacher education program. Portal schools have leadership favorable to innovation, changing curricula, differentiated staff, and extensive use of media in the instructional program. The function of these schools is to provide: transition from the university pre-service teacher education phases to full-service teaching in the inservice phase, in school situations that operate in harmony with the program model. Concomitant benefits should accrue to the cooperating school systems through portal schools by a supply of teachers who could assume leadership in other schools in the system.

The portal schools themselves would serve not only as training centers but also as demonstration centers for promotion of change within the system.

In the model program preservice and inservice education is a continuous uninterrupted sequence based on teacher performance specifications. Many of these specifications can be effectively acquired by students in a portal school setting since they deal directly with the transitional period between the university campus and the classroom.

As envisioned in the conceptual design, each portal school will be equipped with adequate audio and video taping facilities for use by students as they function in their various roles of teacher aide, assistant teacher, and intern. Also other material and equipment for use in modular instruction will be made available so that extended studies may be taken while students are in these centers.

Each portal school will be staffed with a coordinator whose function will be to coordinate placement arrangements for laboratory experiences, and to make available to elementary education students in the center the resources required by the students engaged in specified learning tasks.

Portal schools will be identified and selected by the school system administration on the general criterion of their overall adaptability and value to a teacher education program.

Other criteria to be used in their selection will relate to the quality of the educational program being offered in the school, the willingness of the administration and the majority of the school faculty to work with the program, and the ethnic and socioeconomic population of the school community. Additiona criteria for identification and selection of portal schools will be specified as the effectiveness of them is assessed. Since the program is a feedback model, continuous evaluative data as to effectiveness will be easily accessible.

All students will be required to remain in a portal school for a ten week period in order to allow time for evaluation of their experiences and to minimize the administrative problems caused by shorter periods in the classroom. Students who acquire the suggested performance criteria in a shorter length of time will undertake additional tasks.

It should be noted that in some systems portal schools may be utilized on a revolving basis, whereby those being used one year may be different from those used in the same school system another year. This feature will enable local school administrators to distribute the impact and benefit of the influx of elementary education students over a broader base.

Publicschool elementary classroom teachers in portal schools will function as laboratory sponsoring teachers and/or laboratory clinical instructors. The former will work with

elementary education students who are serving as teaching aides and assistant teachers during their field experiences. The latter will work with student interns during their internship. Special preservice orientation and inservice training sessions will be provided for these instructors to insure their effectiveness. Adequate and reasonable renumeration will be provided.

Identification and selection of the laboratory sponsoring teachers and the laboratory clinical instructors will be accomplished jointly by local school system administrators and an appropriate college representative. Specific criteria for selection will be established in the development phase of the model program. These will relate to current teaching effectiveness, teaching experience, professional certification and educational qualifications.

Within each center provision will be made to identify certain better qualified laboratory sponsoring teachers and laboratory clinical instructors. These will be designated specifically for working with individual students who cannot acquire the required teaching competancies within the established period and will need further time and assistance.

Additional personnel assigned to the centers will be known as clinical professors. They will work with the elementary education students and the laboratory sponsoring

teachers and clinical instructors of one or two portal schools. Mention of these personnel is made here to emphasize the facts that 10 to 15 elementary education students will be assigned to each portal school and that the utilization of college personnel in this manner will provide for maximum efficiency and effectiveness. The purpose will be to enable the coordinator to become extremely well acquainted with portal school staff members and the school community. It will also enable this person to function effectively as a resource person for the school and the elementary education student by being constantly on the scene. It will provide the opportunity for continuous appraisal of students' progress and relevant seminars conducted on a continuing basis, both for preservice and in-service personnel.

Clinical professors may be drawn from college or public school personnel, or employed on a joint appointment basis. Past experience with supervisory personnel working with student teachers under similar appointments has shown that such arrangements are possible and effective.

Present Operation

The University of Georgia has set up twelve portal schools as of July 1, 1971. In each of the twelve schools there is a university faculty member (assistant professor or above) who serves as a center coordinator. This faculty member is in the

schools whenever students are there. The coordinator also coordinates the efforts of members of a team of university staff who work with students and the staff of the portal schools.

Students are assigned to Portal Schools for a quarter. They are given credit through clustering a group of courses into what is called a field experience block. This also provides an administrative device for accounting for faculty time. Each student now spends four quarters in Portal Schools. Normally there is one at the sophomore level, one at the junior level, and two at the senior level. This varies some because of transfer students and the fact that the program has been in full operation for only one year.

Portal School Experience I

In Experience I each student enrolls in courses formerly designated as Introduction to Education, Human Growth and Development and Health Education. The team includes university instructors for these three areas. One serves as the school coordinator. Each student was assigned to a teacher as a teacher's aide during the quarter. His assignments are generally non-instructional in the public school classroom and vary considerably according to the students' level of competency and the needs of the teacher. Instructional work usually involves assisting individual children or guiding small class groups in practice activities which follow initial

presentations made by the classroom teacher.

Objectives for Experience I are developed under four categories: (1) teaching as a profession; (2) an understanding of the school in the social order; (3) a study of self; and (4) teaching skill development. (Complete lists of these are available on request.)

Portal School Experience II

Students in Experience II are enrolled in courses formerly designated as Educational Psychology, Teaching Arithmetic, Teaching Physical Education, and General Methods and Materials. The instructional team was made up of university personnel from these four areas plus a media person. One person on the team is designated as coordinator. In the portal school classrooms, the students are encouraged to observe, record, and react to individual pupil behaviors, classroom interaction, and the learning climate in the classroom. Their role is that of a teaching assistant who carries out not only non-instructional tasks but certain instructional tasks involving individuals or small groups of students.

Performance objectives of Experience II focused on developing systematic observational skills of verbal and non-verbal interaction in the classroom, observing and recording behavior of the individual child, developing instructional materials to assist the teacher, and planning instructional

programs with the teacher. (Complete lists are available on request.)

Portal School Experience III

Students in Experience III are enrolled in courses formerly designated as General Elementary Curriculum, Teaching Science, Teaching Social Studies, and Teaching Language Arts. The team of university instructors is made up of persons from these four areas plus media, with one designated as coordinator. Students function as teaching assistants, teaching units of work in the three curriculum areas.

Objectives in Experience III clustered around teaching techniques and skills in laboratory situations. Students are given opportunities to develop a variety of classroom strategies from which to draw during his teaching experience. These strategies include the areas of classroom management, discipline, as well as the instructional areas.

Portal School Experience IV

Students in Experience IV are enrolled in courses formerly designated as student teaching. In this phase of the program twelve to fifteen students are assigned to a school to practice and eventually demonstrate their competencies prior to moving into a full time teaching position. They work with the total elementary school program, and their activities under the supervision of master teachers are coordinated by a university

professor who is assigned to that school.

Inservice for Teachers in the Portal Schools

In all schools the university staff is active in working with the portal school staff. This involves work with individuals, small groups, and the total faculty. Demonstrations, consultations, and actual classes for credit are the instructional methods used to date.

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